

V E R S E S

MAX JOHNSTON



WE ACTORS

All of us are actors,  
 The whole world is a stage,  
 Each one writes his own lines,  
 Each day is a new page;  
 Our act we can make it  
 Very poor or very fine,  
 The former dies when we die,  
 The latter lives throughout all time.

Let us not sit in the boxes  
 And as critics judge the show,  
 It is behind the footlights  
 Our efforts all should go;  
 There we can help our fellows  
 Who find the acting hard,  
 At some distant day we perhaps will learn  
 That that was when we starred.

We should aim to perform truly  
 And watch carefully our cues,  
 For the Great Director up above  
 Our actions every moment views;  
 If we play our part as true men  
 In the mighty earthly cast,  
 We'll hear the commendation, "Well done"  
 When the curtain falls at last.

BATTLE

With all your might pursue the fight  
 Though wounded and battered and marred;  
 While you have sight do what is right,  
 Though bloodied and broken and scarred;  
 To the man who stays down goes not the crown,  
 But to him though bruised and sick,  
 Gets up once more, plunges in as before,  
 He's the man that nothing can lick;  
 So with might and main the struggle maintain,  
 For perhaps victory is nigh;  
 If the end of the strife be not in this life,  
 Fight on and fighting die.

THE GREATEST CHRISTMAS GIFT

O'er Bethlehem's hills a great light shone,  
 Angel myriads burst forth in song  
 Proclaiming Him who then was born  
 For Man - sinful, lost, forlorn.

That little Babe in the manger lying,  
 Who became our Saviour in His dying,  
 From Crib to Cross himself he gave -  
 What greater gift could mankind crave?

Don't Despair

When you think all love is dead,  
 Keep on, mayhap you'll find ahead  
 Around the bend there waits for you  
 The greatest love you ever knew.

Pretending

Why all this pretending,  
 Saying things you don't mean,  
 Causing trouble unending,  
 Raising a dense smoke screen  
 That hides the person you are  
 From those who would like to see?  
 Isn't it better by far  
 Your own true self to be?

Album Verses

When the years roll by and you reach old age,  
 Think of me as you read this page;  
 Just a little thought for a friend of old,  
 Whose friendship never will grow cold.

For after time has quickly sped,  
 We'll walk with slow and faltering tread  
 And think of the years that fill the past,  
 Thankful for the friends that last.

Twilight

All is hushed, the breezes stir  
 And gently sway the aged fir;  
 The sunbeams fade one by one,  
 As dips in space the western sun.

The heavens turn red, purple, pink,  
 Their beauty thirstily I drink,  
 And gaze in silence reverently  
 Thanking God that sight to see.

Stealthily the darkness falls,  
 High in the nskyt a night-bird calls--  
 Night of peace with naught that mars,  
 Soft shining moon and glit'ring stars.

Music That Inspires

Melodies that flood the soul,  
 Like sunbeams at day's birth  
 Wave-like through the ether roll  
 And burst upon the earth.

Wafting one through space and time  
 Into a world of light;  
 Filling the heart with love divine -  
 A glimpse of the infinite.

Music bringing peace and hope,  
 Yet ever urging on  
 To conquer peaks that lie remote  
 Beyond tomorrow's dawn.

The Birth of a Poem

List to the song of the poet  
 That so deeply touches the heart,  
 Ah! The truth, would you know it?  
 'Tis balm to the wounds that smart.

When the heart can no outlet find  
 For the pain that's prisoned within  
 Succour it seeks, and its servant Mind  
 Does a new, sad song begin.

Whene'er you read the words of those  
 Who sing in plaintive strain,  
 Express not scorn, nobody knows  
 How deep they root in pain.

Reflections on a Clock

As we daily face the world  
 Are we revealing what is true?  
 While going around just what tasks  
 Do we find for our hands to do?

As inevitably life ticks on  
 Do our feet in His way tend?  
 Will the Judge all-merciful find  
 Much in our lives he can commend?

God grant to us the grace and strength  
 Faithful to his will to be  
 And that all our lives be spent  
 Loving and serving him constantly.

A Grandfather's Thoughts

While sitting in my armchair  
 Listening to the radio  
 Dreamily my thoughts turned back  
 To days of long ago.

Before me passed my childhood hours  
 To those now gone I talked;  
 There was no pain in memory's lane  
 Through which I lightly walked.

Thus I dreamed until there came  
 And sat upon my knee  
 A little child who sweetly smiled  
 And cuddled up to me.

While I had longed for days of yore  
 For hearts and joys so pleasant,  
 God all-wise sent other ties  
 To bind me to the present.

My Friend

Each morn on looking out my window  
 What a pleasant sight to see  
 There waving gaily at me,  
 My old friend the maple tree.

With limbs outstretched to heaven  
 Yet holding firmly to the earth,  
 It gives one cause to ponder  
 On life's meaning and its worth.

From winter's slumbers it arouses  
 To put on its leafy dress,  
 And like an ardent lover  
 Seeks the warming sun's caress.

For the birds it is a haven,  
 To the squirrel it is a home,  
 To man it speaks of peace and beauty  
 For he lives not by bread alone.

With the circling of the seasons  
 As the Creator does dispose,  
 It drops its summer raiment  
 And once more takes repose.

Like man it drifts to slumber  
 With a white blanket round its feet  
 And awaits the coming springtime  
 When the miracle will repeat.

Eastward Ho

From the Pacific's shore we eastward climb,  
 Through the mountains, rocky, wild, sublime;  
 O'er gorges deep, past rivers swift,  
 Where hoary-headed peaks do lift.

Looking down they seem to say,  
 "O Man who passes by this way  
 We who high above thee tower  
 Are earthly symbols of God's power."

Up to and over the Great Divide  
 Down to the Golden West we glide,  
 To the rolling plains where the cattle run  
 And fertile fields stretch away to the sun.

Then past lakes and hills pine-clad,  
 We see the freedom the Redman had,  
 And then it is we understand  
 Why he called this country the beautiful land.

Peace Passing All Understanding

I lie on the verdant downy sod  
 And look up to Heaven and think of God,  
 Silently with Him commune  
 And to His will my soul attune.

From my heart there comes a prayer  
 Rising through the summer air,  
 A prayer that I may more become  
 Like Jesus Christ His only Son.

Who was so loving and so kind,  
 Who gave His life that man might find  
 The way leading back to Him  
 Away from selfishness and sin.

O'er my soul steals the peace  
 That from all fears gives release;  
 It comes from Him to those that pray  
 For guidance on the Heavenly Way.

Friends

Faithful friends are a blessing,  
 Like an answer to a prayer;  
 Troublous times may come distressing  
 Then your load they'll help you bear  
 By your side they take their stand,  
 Strength and courage they impart,  
 With kindly word and helping hand  
 Show the love of friendly heart.

Dedication of the new organ in St. Barnabas Church, November 1st, 1963

Great instrument, skillfully made  
 To help God's children sing His praise;  
 Long may its harmonies pervade  
 His house and lead in holy lays.

When years are gone and we are dust  
 Still will peal forth its stirring strains;  
 Others will sing their hymns of trust,  
 Ever the praise of God remains.

Let anthems rise while life does last,  
 Sing with melody in the heart;  
 Then when our earthly days are past  
 We will with heaven's choirs take part.

#### A Lenten Prayer

Into Thy House, dear God, these Lenten days,  
 Turning for minutes from our daily task,  
 We come Thy Holy Name to praise  
 And, penitent, forgiveness of our sins to ask.

Within this place of holy quiet 'tis good,  
 Forgetting for a while the turbulence without,  
 To raise our thoughts to Thee, as we more often should,  
 And seek Thy strength to put dread sin to rout.

May we in all the days that are to come  
 Open our hearts to, and show forth, Thy love;  
 And by the sacrificial blood Thy Loving Son  
 Shed for us all, may all be raised above.

#### Beautiful Things

A golden sunset, an innocent child,  
 A lone tree on a hill,  
 A lake enclosed by mountains wild,  
 All give the soul a thrill.

Written gems for man and youth  
 From all the ages' wise,  
 Whose words, glittering with the truth,  
 Minds uplift to the skies.

Much of beauty life contains,  
 So many beautiful views;  
 Like a succession of picture frames  
 We see just what we choose.

Seek for beauty, as you go  
 You'll find Christ always brings  
 The best to him who yearns to know  
 The truly beautiful things.

Office Gypsy

Sweeping green fields and the open road,  
 That and no other abode,  
 A soul filled with song  
 And thinking no wrong,  
 For all these things I eagerly long.

'Tis thus that I would travel far,  
 No daily rut, no guiding star;  
 I'd choose the way  
 At break of day  
 And whether to haste or make delay.  
 The life it is for which I yearn,  
 To which in dreamy thought I turn;  
 'Twill never be  
 This reverie  
 Substitute for reality.

What is Life

What is life? Is it the making of money?  
 So many strive at it, isn't it funny;  
 They work and worry giving most of their days  
 To gaining a packet in myriads of ways;  
 And it never seems to enter their mind  
 Real living, that way, they never will find.

Temptation

Evil temptation creeps into the soul  
 And makes its abode bit by bit,  
 Before very long it is found that the whole  
 Of the body's in bondage to it.

Keep it out - that's the best defence,  
 Prevention is better than cure;  
 Holiness is its own recompense,  
 True happiness is being pure.

True, we are human and quite prone to sin,  
 That's all the more reason for care;  
 Guard your soul, don't let sin in  
 To endanger God's temple there.

Night

O haven of repose, I gladly lay  
 Upon thy bosom quiet my wearied head;  
 Forgetful of the cares that filled the day  
 Along cool, peaceful paths my soul is lead.

The sighing of the wind in tree-tops high  
 Whispers to the spirit secrets deep.  
 And myriad shining stars illumine the sky -  
 Of God I think, and thinking, fall asleep.



The Alphabetical Marathon

A Is Ambitious, ever wants to be first  
 B Is Bound he won't be the worst;  
 C Counts on staying through the whole race  
 D Doggedly maintains a consistent pace;  
 E Exerts his all to run at his best  
 F Fights hard to keep up with the rest  
 G Gallops along his mind set to win  
 H Hopes that at least he'll come in.  
 I His Intent is to run a good race  
 J Jogs along never slowing his pace;  
 K Knows it's worthwhile though sometimes a grind  
 L Looks to the goal to which the long road does wind;  
 M Musters his strength, he's resolved he will make it.  
 N Never gives up, his faith you can't shake it;  
 O Onward he goes, he just won't relent  
 P Pushes forward with his strength almost spent;  
 Q Will not Quit for he knows it's worthwhile  
 R Remains in there long mile after mile;  
 S Steady he goes though gasping for breath  
 T Tries with his might, he's in to the death;  
 U Under great strain his legs he keeps moving  
 V Ventures on his constancy proving;  
 W Will not stop despite the race's great length  
 X Is X-erting every ounce of his strength.  
 Y Yearns to most strongly contend  
 Z Says "Zounds, here I am at the end."

The Prize

In life's race we should bear ever in mind  
 Though the fast and strong we may come behind;  
 Staying the course he who earnestly tries  
 Will receive at the end a glorious prize;  
 With Him who loves good things to give  
 The faithful runner will eternally live.

Mar.25/83

Purpose

Go on, go on, persevere,  
 No matter if the way's not clear;  
 Go on, go on, don't wait for light,  
 'Twill come like dawn succeeds the night.  
 Never once admit defeat;  
 Pause if you must, but don't retreat;  
 And happy be if at day's end  
 Life indicates an upward trend.  
 Rule your body, steel your will,  
 Thoughts vain and idle quickly kill;  
 Plant at once ambition's seed,  
 Then set your course - you will succeed.

2  
A Prayer

O Loving Father hear my prayer,  
Ne'er let my feet stray far from Thee;  
Constantly make me aware  
Of the great love Thou hast for me.

When like a magnet sin attracts  
From the way the Saviour trod,  
Give me the strength my spirit lacks,  
Turn me again to Thee, my God.

The weakness that is often shown  
By me, a sinner, please forgive;  
I with remorse the past bemoan,  
Blot out my sins and let me live.

The Pharisee

Within the temple court he stood,  
Raising aloft his eyes;  
Told God how well His laws he kept  
And the measure of his tithes.

Not as the nearby publican  
Was his life soiled and low;  
The Law exactly he observed,  
A way blameless he did go.

He fasted oft, no man he owed,  
Scrupulous in every act;  
So none in him could find a fault,  
Thus his life - it was a fact.

The Publican

The publican with eyes downcast,  
Beating hard upon his breast,  
Piteously cried out to God  
And his wrong to him confessed.

"A sinner I, have mercy, God,  
You know my unworthiness;  
I have no right to come to Thee  
Asking your forgiveness."

"My life is open to your sight,  
All I've done you know;  
For me please take away the taint  
And wash me white as snow."

- - -

Jesus said, 'Twas the publican  
Rather than the pharisee  
Whom God considered justified  
By his deep humility.

10  
Our Neighbour

A lawyer of our Saviour sought to know  
Who might his neighbour be;  
Then Jesus this parable told to show  
So all could rightly see.

Down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho  
A lone traveller went;  
Of the danger ahead he did not know  
From those with evil intent.

Robbers lurking in the thickets around  
Saw him as he drew nigh;  
Pounced upon him, beat him to the ground  
And left him there to die.

Stripped, possessions taken, abandoned he lay,  
Sore-wounded and blood-stained;  
Succour he needed without delay  
For little of life remained.

Shortly a temple priest came by  
And viewed him with deep dismay;  
Not moved to aid, he let him lie  
Passing by the other way.

Of the victim's need he was aware,  
He could have tried to render aid;  
Was it that he simply did not care  
Or of being involved afraid?

A Levite then came to that spot,  
Seeing the poor man's plight  
Like the priest he, too, did naught  
But hastened out of sight.

Along the way a Samaritan came -  
He of a people much despised -  
Saw the man wounded, bleeding, in pain,  
His need he at once realized.

Filled with compassion he quickly went  
To him now near death's door;  
Binding his wounds (Much effort he spent)  
Into which oil and wine he did pour.

On his beast to an inn the man he bore,  
Paid the landlord on leaving next day;  
Telling him if care were to cost more  
When he returned he would pay.

"Think you, which of these three neighbour would be?"  
Jesus asked. The lawyer replied,  
"He that showed mercy, it's clear to see,  
Not those passing by on the side."

"Go and do likewise," was the command  
Jesus then to the lawyer gave;  
May His followers this parable understand  
And resolve to thus ever behave.

Oct.24/73

The Prodigal Son

To his father the younger of two sons made plea  
To portion to him the possessions he was due;  
Long had he yearned strange and distant lands to see  
And wanton pleasures and desires to pursue.

With foreboding the father granted his request,  
Aware his son knew not what evil lay in wait;  
So the boy left home for the life he deemed was best,  
Heedless of the sad father's farewell at the gate.

Then gaily on the road to the far land he went,  
Dreaming the while how happy his life there would be;  
In dalliance and worldly joys to find content  
And from responsibilities be fully free.

Thus it seemed as with gaiety the days were filled,  
Like-minded friends aplenty joined him in the fun;  
By their company and flattery he was thrilled  
And believed like this life would forever run.

When a dreadful famine descended on that land  
The lad realized all he possessed was gone;  
Fearfully he sought for help on every hand  
Yet did not find it - not one friend to call upon.

Deeply distressed he accepted lowliest hire  
Tending daily in the fields a herd of swine;  
So far had he sunk to nought else could he aspire,  
So hungered that on pigs' husks he'd gladly dine.

In contemplation of his plight rose thoughts of home,  
Fared not his father's servants well with much to spare,  
He to his father would return - no longer roam -  
His servant be and his unworthiness declare.

Remorsefully aware how deeply he had sinned,  
To journey to his former home he was resolved;  
In sincere contrition and with eyes tear-dimmed  
All thoughts of pleasure and self-seeking were dissolved.

To the long road he took, not blightly as he came,  
Physical and spiritual strength was very low;  
Remembrance of his actions filled his soul with shame,  
Though eager to move onward progress was slow.

Often his father, hope and longing in his heart,  
Looked down the road to see if he might come in sight;  
What joy should his dear son return and ne'er depart,  
He in the window each evening set a light.

Mayhap in darkness he might from the roadway stray,  
In weariness and weakness stumble and ill befall;  
The homelight beckoning would guide him on his way  
And drawing nearer the father would hear his call.

Then one day as he had expectant often done  
The eager father to the horizon gazed;  
Sighting a figure he was certain was his son,  
In his yearning heart love and compassion blazed.

Unhesitant he rushed his long-lost boy to greet,  
Clasping him in his arms a kiss of welcome gave;  
Never to him had there been a day so sweet,  
His son, so it seemed, had come back from the grave.

"I'm not worthy," said the lad, "to be a son to you,  
In truth since leaving you my life has been misspent;  
I only ask you take me back and with me do  
Your will - of all wrong-doing sincerely I repent."

The father to his waiting servants gave command,  
"Get quickly and my son dress with the finest robe  
Put shoes upon his feet and ring upon his hand  
And joyfully we shall take him to his abode."

"Prepare the fatted calf for on this day we feast  
In celebration of my long-gone son's return;  
Let there be dancing and music, it is the least  
We should do so he may our utmost joy discern."

Nearby the elder brother heard the joyful sounds  
And asked a servant to tell him what they meant;  
Told his brother had come home, his anger knew no bounds,  
Sullenly he refused to join the merriment.

To him his father pled, "Is it not right and good  
We should gladly welcome one we thought was dead;  
Your brother is alive, don't stay apart and brood,  
For his sadness let's give love and joy instead."

Cried the self-pitying son, "Not for me have you  
Ever a feast have given to make merry with my friends;  
I have ever served you well and your will I do,  
While my wastrel brother a sinful life he spends."

"You ever have been with me, all I have is yours,"  
The father said, "My love you've had you know full well,  
And your brother's homecoming for us all assures  
That now our family will in completeness dwell."

Whether like the elder brother we with our Father stay  
And daily his wondrous blessings and mercies know;  
Or are far-distant as the Prodigal did stray,  
The Father to his strong, loving arms would have us go.

So when we hear the gracious call, "Come home, come home,"  
May our wandering feet make haste to go to Him  
And hear His most loving voice in gentle tone  
Say gladly, "It is well, now all my family's in."



13  
God's Children

Man stands upon this whirling sphere  
And views with awe and trepidation  
The wonders God has brought to pass  
Throughout His infinite creation.

The large, the small - million-miled suns,  
Atoms unseen by human eye -  
And yet each proper in its place;  
Man ponders all and wonders, "Why?"

It seems so much a perfect work  
A vast, majestic, divine plan  
That we are forced to ask ourselves  
The relationship of this to Man.

Is he of the earth, earthy,  
With no link beyond life here?  
Does he in vain hope for another?  
Can Man's prospect be so drear?

Of what is he that he dare hope  
For a better than now is known?  
Has he done anything to merit  
Immortality when life has flown?

Men have done so many things  
To indicate their special powers,  
Creating empires, developing arts --  
All in Nature is made ours.

But hydra-headed sin (that in so many ways  
Has stained men's hearts and hands)  
Its ugliness too frequent rears  
In this and other lands.

Still men there are of generous heart  
Sadly the world has need of such,  
Who spend life caring for the poor;  
Yes, 'tis true, these have done much.

And we see and oft do know  
The love and unfeigned joy  
Of family life and friendship  
That Time never will destroy.

But still is asked, "What is Man?"  
Being good or base or both,  
Do his best and noblest works  
Warrant hereafter further growth?

For Man there would be little hope  
Had God not sent His Son, The Man,  
To be and do for all of us  
What no other ever can.

His Life, His Work, His Cross, His Blood,  
His sacrifice, these alone  
Do all that Man could never do --  
Grant him the hope of eternal home.

The foolish man saith in his heart,  
"There is no God."

No God to whom to utter prayers?  
 No God who knows? No God who cares?  
 All of life in silence bound?  
 And God, though sought, not to be found?

No good, no hope, no love, no cheer,  
 No hereafter, only the here;  
 With future dark and sadly bleak,  
 We stand alone forlorn and weak?

Cling though we may to those most dear,  
 Parting comes, and the frequent tear  
 Shed for them placed beneath the sod  
 Matters not, for there is no God?

- - -

Oh no, no, no, a thousand nos!  
 As sure as the sun this morn rose  
 God lives and cares and always will,  
 Ours but through all to trust Him still.

He is ready blessings to pour  
 Into our hands in richest store;  
 Open your soul, Jesus receive;  
 Son, Spirit, Father ever believe.

1947

"Even as much as ye do it unto the  
 least of these, ye do it unto Me".

Heedless man gives so little thought  
 To the ill-clad, ill-fed throng;  
 Oh, where is the love that Jesus taught?  
 This blot, O God, how long?

We say 'tis a prosperous nation,  
 But that assertion is wrong,  
 Too many are facing starvation;  
 This blight, O God, how long?

Many enjoy luxurious ease,  
 Their lives are smooth as a song,  
 While others live prey to disease;  
 This curse, O God, how long?

We claim we are working for His cause,  
 And that to Christ we belong;  
 We forget the poor, thus break His laws;  
 This sin, O God, how long?

Whence and Where to

Aeons and aeons had gone their way,  
 Myriad galaxies swirled in space,  
 Before on this planet man saw the day  
 And found for himself an abiding place.

Puzzled he enquires whence have I come  
 And to what destiny do I tend?  
 The depths of knowledge he does plumb  
 Endeavouring thus to comprehend.

He searches the sea and scans the sky,  
 Probes with scalpel and microscope,  
 To find the answer to "How" and "Why",  
 Shall he find it or forever grope?

His restlessness will not be stilled,  
 Because within him there surges up  
 Strong longings seeking to be fulfilled,  
 He yearns with life's wine to fill his cup.

In whatever way man came to be  
 He is certain he is more than brute;  
 A planner and creator is he,  
 If it can be done he will do it.

This is the great gift God has given,  
 Permitting Man to share in His power,  
 And by this spirit man is driven  
 Year by year, day by day, hour by hour.

When answers elude, man must then go  
 To Him who wondrously created all  
 And learn from Him what he needs to know -  
 That He Himself came his soul to call.

Let us duly praise and give glory  
 To our God who has wrought so well;  
 He will reveal the end of the story  
 When with Him we eternally dwell.

"I am with You Always"

It seems so often when I pray  
 I seek for leading in Your way;  
 Yet just as oft, when off my knees,  
 I find I'm doing as I please.

Dear Father, make me understand  
 That you are always near at hand;  
 In thought, word, act help me to do  
 Everything as unto you.

June 17/83.

Faith

Though, Father, I have not sight to see  
 Nor will to do nor strength to bear,  
 Give me the faith to cling to Thee,  
 Believing always Thou art there.

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and  
 there shall be no more death, neither sorrow or  
 crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for  
the former things have passed away."

In that great and glorious day  
 God all tears shall wipe away;  
 Souls no more shall fear the morrow,  
 Gone all crying and all sorrow;  
 With it, too, shall vanish pain,  
 Then nought that was shall remain.

The Emmaus Walk

The twain walked sadly on that day  
 Until there came a third  
 Who, as they went Emmaus way,  
 Interpreted the Word.

Their eyes were held, they did not know  
 'Twas Christ the Son of God  
 Who companioned them in accents low  
 On the dusty broad they trod.

With rapt mind and burning heart  
 They drank in all He said  
 And constrained Him not to depart  
 But to sup with them instead.

It was in the breaking of the bread  
 They knew it was Christ indeed --  
 The living Christ, no longer dead,  
 Risen the world to feed.

O may we have Him in our walk  
 And in whate'er we do,  
 Girt with a faith as firm as rock  
 Hold to His way - the true.

Thanksgiving

When winter comes, snowy and cold,  
 Forget not autumn's red and gold;  
 Nor summer's rampant verdancy  
 Or spring's re-birth we yearly see;  
 The seasons thus do well accord,  
 For all of them we thank you, Lord.

Sep. 24/78.

Jesus

It was because they never knew Him  
 That they ignorantly slew Him,  
 Who came for them to pour His lifeblood out;  
 As they nailed Him to the Cross  
 Realizing not their loss,  
 Of their justification they had not a doubt.

Looking down in utmost sadness  
 He asked God's forgiveness of their madness,  
 "For," he said, "they know not what they do."  
 His soul for their souls pleading  
 While He hung pierced, riven, bleeding,  
 Thus He gave himself for them, for me, for you.

As we gaze upon Him does it not seem that He  
 Is saying to each one, "What are you giving me?"

Christ's Commands

Truly love God with all your heart,  
 And as yourself your neighbour too;  
 This God's Law fulfills in every part  
 Making you a disciple true.

Let not your love restricted be,  
 Extend it both to friend and foe;  
 For God your Father kind is He  
 To all His creatures here below.

Preaching Christ's gospel everywhere  
 To all who seek and all who heed  
 Will glean a harvest beyond compare  
 If you faithfully sow the seed.

Christ's yoke is easy, His burden light  
 For the load He mostly bears;  
 Leading us in the way that's right  
 He our eternal home prepares.

Nov.26/82

Resolve

There's no time to spend in hate,  
 For the hour is growing late;  
 Whatever's left for me to live,  
 May I with love my efforts give.

Ills and sorrows do surround,  
 Needs of many so abound;  
 I should show I am aware  
 And concerned reveal I care.

Give unasked a helping hand,  
 Patient, try to understand;  
 Learn to feel, and help, and lift,  
 And know that this is God's best gift.



Jesus' Followers

"The Lamb of God - the One foretold."  
 Said John at Jordan of our Lord;  
 It is of Him prophets of old  
 Their revelations did record.

When Jesus asked to be baptized,  
 John said, "Of such Thou hast no need."  
 But that God's righteousness be realized  
 Jesus urged him to proceed.

As from the water Jesus came,  
 God's Spirit dove-like hovered o'er;  
 His voice as thunder did proclaim,  
 "This is my Son whom I adore!"

From thence he journeyed to the wild,  
 Was thrice by Satan tempted there,  
 But faithful overcame each trial  
 And learned God's will by fast and prayer.

Then forth he went his task to do,  
 Choosing twelve followers to teach,  
 That when his work on earth was through  
 They would to all the gospel preach.

Like those chosen ones so should we,  
 Now and all our lifetime through  
 Believe and give and do and be  
 Just what Jesus wants us to.

Christ Stills the Waves

"We fear the storm," His disciples cried,  
 He bade the restless waves subside;  
 The tempests that assault the soul  
 He also has power to control.

When lashing gales and seas storm-tossed  
 Make you feel that all is lost,  
 Fear not, for One is standing by  
 Who speaks with comfort, "It is I."

The Unanswered Prayer

Someday, perhaps, in a happier land  
 We'll see and fully understand  
 The reason why  
 Our tearful cry  
 Brought no answer from the sky.  
 Eyes filled with blinding tears,  
 Souls with depressing fears,  
 So poorly see  
 The light that He  
 Sends to set the suffering free.

Man's Lunacy

Countless poets have for ages past  
 The wonders of the moon extolled;  
 And lovers nightly skyward cast  
 Their gaze upon that orb so old.

Its beauty their emotions stirred,  
 Its constant cycle courage gave;  
 In flight more graceful than a bird,  
 It failed not man from birth to grave.

But man, not satisfied to leave  
 The plan so wise by nature set,  
 A better one he thinks to weave  
 Which he, in time, may well regret.

He hurls his man-made moons aloft,  
 His schemes and dreams go on apace;  
 At sages' warnings he has scoffed,  
 So eager he to conquer space.

What is this urge that drives him on -  
 Desire to achieve or to escape?  
 The world is yearning for the dawn  
 While doom looms round in ugly shape.

O give your minds and wills and hearts  
 To help man find his lost estate;  
 The Saviour still the truth imparts,  
 Do heed His call! - the hour is late.

The Choice

Why do we not refrain from hate,  
 Why let arms-building escalate;  
 Is death-dealing ours and others fate?  
 Wish we thus mankind to obliterate?

First 'twas stones and clubs to kill and maim,  
 Then arrows, spears and swords came;  
 Later, as though all went insane,  
 Powder, shells and bombs fell like rain.

Choosing love is the true and rightful way  
 For it to God we should earnestly pray;  
 The greatest love did His Son display  
 When He on the cross His life did pay.

Mankind the way of love should seek,  
 Learning love is strong while hate is weak;  
 In each act we do and each word we speak,  
 Let's do it in love and hatred defeat.

Oct.24/78.

20  
The Gift

O, Thou Babe of Bethlehem.  
Who came to bring us peace;  
Our cry to Thee arises,  
"When shall our warfare cease?"

Why ignore we Thy message,  
Revealed to all mankind,  
To strive not with our brother  
But love with heart and mind?

We've reached the end of scheming,  
All the ways have been tried,  
Except the one you marked for us  
Ere being crucified.

Remove from us our blindness  
And dissipate our fear;  
As on the first great Christmas  
Again to us appear.

Give us ears to listen to  
And hearts inclined to heed  
The glorious eternal message  
That Christ is God indeed.

We have a God who loves us  
And a Saviour who died;  
What more need we ask for  
At this new Christmastide.

The New Testament

The books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John  
Are the gospels for us to meditate on;  
The Acts of the Apostles to us do display  
How Christ's followers walked in His Way;  
Then come Paul's fervent exhortations  
To the Romans, Corinthians and Galatians;  
Ephesians and Phillipians receive letters too,  
And Colossians and Thessalonians, then Paul is through  
What he has to say to the churches seven  
About how they should walk their way to Heaven.  
Nine more books the New Testament conclude,  
Hebrews, James, Peter, John and Jude;  
Then comes the word proclaimed to every nation,  
The final book of all - John's Revelation.

Nov.21/84.

Parting

When it comes our time to die  
Sad 'twill be to say "Good-bye";  
Solaced, however, as we go  
That later will come a joyous "Hello".

Mar.29/85

I was glad when they said unto me, let us go  
into the house of the Lord (Psalm 122, Verse 1)

We spend the days in so many ways,  
Our tasks we daily perform;  
With hours of ease we do as we please,  
Resting when tired and worn.

Do we give thought, as Christians we ought,  
To go to the house of prayer  
Each Lord's Day our homage to pay  
And our love and praise declare?

He who gave all to each does call  
"Come to the Heavenly board;  
It is spread for you, if this you do  
You'll know me truly as Lord".

Then we'll be glad at the joy we had  
While in the House of the Lord;  
Assured as we go His presence we'll know  
And His love so freely outpoured.

July 11/82.

### Offertory

It is the Lord's money so let us not shirk  
In giving and using it for His good work;  
Whether from an abundance or the widow's small mite  
If willingly given it's blest in His sight;  
The Great Giver knows 'tis of His but a part  
Aug.16/84. And pleased when it's offered with all of one's heart.

### God's Gold

Those who sought gold to acquire,  
It being all their heart's desire,  
Patiently toiled by mountain streams,  
The thought of it filled their dreams;  
Tirelessly the silt they sluiced  
For the glittering grains that it produced.

God desires much gold to gain,  
Christ died that treasure to obtain;  
In every soul the grains reside  
That Christ seeks from dross to divide  
So that by Him they be refined  
To purest gold - the eternal kind.

June 16/85.

Mates

Mates, aye mates, Dear, are we  
 And mates co-equal we'll be;  
 As our marital ship  
 Glides down the slip,  
 Hopefully we put to sea.

There's a beauteous port to be sought,  
 Priceless jewels are there to be bought,  
 They are the heart's treasure  
 Beyond all human measure,  
 Love can and will buy the lot.

We may not always ride the wave's crest,  
 In the trough sometimes we shall rest,  
 The ups and the downs,  
 Fate's smiles and her frowns,  
 Shall find our love strong for the test.

Though the ocean's tempestuous gale  
 Buffets our craft 'twill find it not frail,  
 From the stem to the stern  
 It will remain staunch and firm,  
 Growing stronger each day that we sail.

We, knowing what comradeship means,  
 Shall see with the day's fading beams  
 The love we're revering  
 Our ship straightly steering  
 Into the port of our dreams.

1935.

Absent

If, when I'm away, you just a little care,  
 Breathe for me at nightfall silently a prayer;  
 Where'er I'll be, I'll know and praying make reply  
 Though distance parts us, God will our souls draw nigh.

As the shadows deepen, while the sun sinks out of sight,  
 Tenderly I'll whisper, "Goodnight, my Dear, goodnight,  
 God keep you safe till morning and bring you happiness,  
 With all that's good and lovely may He your soul bless."

Her Answer

He asked her of her love. How deep? How true?  
 With these she answered better than she knew;  
 With tender glance, with soft and loving touch,  
 Thus, uttering not a word, she said - so much.



May I

May I sit beside you here  
 And tell you from a heart sincere  
 Why I want you always, Dear,  
 May I?

May I take your lovely hand  
 And try to make you understand  
 How I love you, how I've planned,  
 May I?

May I uncover all my soul,  
 The record of my life unroll,  
 The race I run and to what goal,  
 May I?

May I have you as my own,  
 The greatest love I've ever known -  
 No longer walk as one alone,  
 May I?

May I hear you say I may  
 Be yours now and every day,  
 At once your answer give, I pray,  
 May I?

Yours

You may sit here at my side  
 And all to me you may confide,  
 My love I will not, cannot hide,  
 I'm yours.

You ask my hand, I give it you  
 To plight my love, and while I do,  
 I know that ever you'll be true  
 To yours.

The goal you seek, if it be my heart,  
 Of you, even now, it is a part;  
 The race, my Love, you need not start,  
 It's yours.

I belong to you and you to me  
 In this life and the life to be;  
 With you I'll walk through eternity,  
 Yours.

An Old Man's Love

Without the ardency of younger days,  
And promise of "ever after" true romance,  
It has better grown in so many ways,  
Though not apparent to the casual glance.

Long years have not dulled the "I love you",  
Written on the heart but seldom said;  
Unuttered perhaps in feeling that you knew  
And had the message always rightly read.

The overlooking of the passing mood,  
When very minor faults were criticized,  
Showed you well understood and didn't brood;  
That love was being masked you realized.

The fears and worries (most did not occur);  
The joys of family life and friendships true,  
Have in their way been to our love a spur  
That with God's help we may much better do.

He did not give me you; you're but a loan;  
We both, in truth, fully to Him belong;  
Until is heard His loving call, "Come home."  
May our deep love by Him be made more strong.

Nov.11/76.

25  
Mother

Through the graveyard I walked slowly  
In the cool of eventide;  
The gentle breezes whispered lowly,  
My deep grief I could not hide.

I longed to have you back once more,  
To clasp you to my breast,  
To hear you singing as of yore,  
Whilst in your arms I rest.

Then I heard a still, small voice  
Which quietly questioned me,  
"Were it in your power to have your choice  
Would you call her back to thee?"

To that small voice I answer gave,  
"Had I the choice the power  
I'd call her not back from the grave  
Be it but for one short hour."

In blessed rest you're free from all  
This world's trouble, pain and fear;  
My love's so deep, I will not call;  
Sleep peacefully on, my Mother dear.

Monty

Our lives of much have been bereft  
Since you are gone and we are left;  
But with us still fond memories stay  
Of you, so early called away.

Warm thoughts of when each was a lad  
And all that made our young hearts glad;  
Those dear ones - some who went before  
And welcomed you on yonder shore.

A home that gave us all that's best,  
With loving parents we were blest;  
They showed the way wherein to go  
While pilgrimaging here below.

And now you too, have left our side  
Our loss we will not, cannot hide;  
Your place no one will ever take  
In these our hearts that sorely ache.

I know you would not wish us sad  
Who in your day made many glad;  
While life was yours you lived it well -  
Greater you'll live where now you dwell.

Of all you were and meant to me  
No words can fitting tribute be;  
The help, the kindness and the love  
Are known to me and God above.

In time we all will join you there  
Where nought is known of pain or care;  
"Tis farewell now, my Brother dear,  
Until God calls us home from here."

Canada

O Canada, glorious and free,  
 Why are we disregarding thee?  
     Land beautiful and broad,  
     Precious gift from Almighty God;  
 What evil causes us to disagree?

O Canada, glorious and free,  
 Wondrous heritage from sea to sea;  
     From every land we or our forbears came,  
     Glad to adopt Canadian as our name,  
 Shouldn't we thank God on bended knee?

O Canada, glorious and free,  
 Land endowed so sumptuously;  
     Where worldwide seek we more?  
     Where find a happier, freer shore?  
 Then why, oh why, cries of disunity?

O Canada, glorious and free,  
 May all Canadians clearly see  
     That you and you only, are our land,  
     And ask God's help to make thee grand  
 And us better citizens of thee.

Au Revoir

Folks, I'll always remember the happy time  
     I had on my vacation  
 One hundred and eight miles up the C P Line,  
     Near old Amyot station.

The friends I made, the trips we took,  
     The scenery unsurpassed;  
 The trout I caught on the old fishhook,  
     Are memories that shall last.

The big moose in the winding creek,  
     The ducks in the wind-blown reeds,  
 When not a one would dare to speak,  
     And oh, those outdoor feeds!

It was kind of hard to break away,  
     But we can't have all we desire;  
 Let's hope we'll all meet again someday  
     Around the old campfire.

Aug.29/29.

The Right Place

Though many haven't the skill to rate as a boss  
     'Tis unjust to write-off all such as a loss;  
 Every man has his gift with the right to his place  
     And in his own field can run a good race;  
 The truth of the matter is that here is the test -  
     What for each is the place where he can serve best?

Autumn Leaves

When we were young our coat was green,  
 But now that summertime has sped  
 In another coat we can be seen  
 Which is dyed in deepest red.

You ask what are we doing here  
 So distant from the place we grew?  
 It is because you are so dear  
 That we most quickly fell for you.

(Response to birthday wishes)

Good Folks:

My sails are rather weathered and torn,  
 And I'm sure that my hull has sprung a leak;  
 Despite being battered, I'm not forlorn  
 And will set out for the port I seek.

Your good wishes have spurred me to once again  
 Sail out on life's wide and mighty main;  
 Your haven, too, I trust, you'll find,  
 And may life's winds all be kind.

Mar.24/69.

A Flea-ting Thought

I think that I shall never see  
 An insect lousier than a flea;  
 A flea that hopping here and there  
 Finally ends up in my hair;  
 While frantically I scratch my head  
 Hoping that flea will drop dead;  
 No, I know I'll never see  
 A lousier insect than a flea.

A flea that loves to take a bite  
 Doing so with all its might;  
 Deciding to set up his home  
 Comfortably on my dome;  
 To live and feast for evermore  
 Not seeking elsewhere to explore;  
 Oh, I wish that flea would flee  
 And no longer bother me.

It would indeed make me glad  
 If he would find another pad  
 Where he could hop and do his thing  
 And someone else be pestering;  
 Leaving me to sit and muse  
 Without a flea to me abuse,  
 Then happy I no more to see  
 Such a lousy insect as a flea.

Mar.23/78.



The Worrier

He worried about his liver, his lungs, and his heart,  
 His appendix, his tummy and almost every part  
 Of his anatomy from head to toe inclusive;  
 He thought all his worrying was to health conducive;  
 He would have lived to be about eighty and eight,  
 If it were not for the fact he met his fate  
 By br'aking his neck when he fell out of bed,  
 He didn't figure on that, so now he is dead --  
 The moral is this, don't let worry get you,  
 Whether it's health or it's wealth don't let it fret you;  
 Just do what you consider is your very best,  
 The good God up above will tend to all the rest.

The Undertaker

When business is dull the undertaker  
 Doesn't make the least complaint;  
 He patiently waits, for sooner or later,  
 He's bound to get you - when you ain't.

Economic laws give him no worry,  
 About the future he has no doubt;  
 He knows, and he is in no hurry,  
 That he'll cash in when you cash out.

The Lucky Guy

That Ogden Nash  
 Made lots of cash  
 By writing trash.

But as for me  
 As you can see  
 My trash is free.

Why did he gain  
 While I did strain  
 But all in vain?

The reason why?  
 He was - not I -  
 A lucky guy.

The Genius

A genius is a kind of guy  
 Who knows much more than you and I,  
 And wherein he's good can clearly spy  
 What surprisingly has missed our eye.  
 Yet we needn't feel too sad and glum  
 For about some things he is quite dumb,  
 And when you think about it some  
 You see, like you and me, he is a bum.

Christmas Eve

It was the day before Christmas,  
 Everybody was out  
 Seeking for something  
 To pour down his throat;  
 Typewriters were silent,  
 Phones rang unheeded;  
 Most under their belts  
 Carried more than they needed;  
 All stared at each other  
 Through eyes bleary and hazy -  
 That's a Merry Christmas?  
 Boy, are we crazy!

Aftermath

'Twas the day after Christmas  
 And few of the staff  
 Had sign of a smile  
 Or sound of a laugh;  
 Their faces were long,  
 Their money was short,  
 Their poor heads ached  
 From too frequent a snort;  
 With digestion upset  
 And too little sleep  
 They pondered the way  
 That Christmas we keep.

Wild Justice

Dandelions are dandy, almost as nice as candy  
 When they're anywhere but on a lawn;  
 If they're there they are a fright  
 Elsewhere they're pretty, gay and bright;  
 Poor things, how can they choose where they spawn?

Lions also are dandy, when they are kept handy  
 Caged safely in a park or zoo;  
 But when loose upon the land  
 We don't think they're quite so grand --  
 Like dandelions they're exterminated too.

Is it not rather sad that things are deemed bad  
 Just because they don't quite suit our taste;  
 If the roles were reversed  
 Wouldn't we feel accursed  
 To so unkindly and unjustly be erased?

The Modern Mariner

He was one it seemed destined for fame,  
 His appellation Jacques Chapdelaine;  
 He dreamed a dream, he would build a boat  
 The like of which ne'er did float;  
 Like Noah of old creating the Ark  
 He toiled before dawn and after dark,  
 Shaping and fitting the wondrous craft -  
 What did he care if the whole world laughed.

One day they would hail him with acclaim,  
 The master builder Chapdelaine;  
 At last the testing day drew nigh  
 When he launched his boat 'neath a sunny sky;  
 He pushed away from the Preville shore  
 And revved the motor, its ascending roar  
 Could be heard by all for miles around  
 But to his ears 'twas a lovely sound.

The boat leaped ahead with a surging drive,  
 While he glowed with the feeling of being alive;  
 As he thought, "I have created a wonder."  
 The bow creaked, buckled and came asunder,  
 Then silently, swiftly, like a rock,  
 It plunged to the bottom of St. Lambert Lock.  
 Fortunately our mariner saved his hide,  
 Though he lost a pocketbook and some pride.

Moral: A boat should be built right from the bottom  
 up. If it isn't you'll end up right on the bottom.

Pemmican

(Written after eating some over eighty years old).

The buffalo roamed long years ago  
 In myriads o'er the Western Plain;  
 By my stomach's state I surely know  
 They're up and on the move again.

For I've indulged that rare delight  
 A feast of age-old pemmican;  
 Should I survive to see this night  
 'Twill prove I am a superman.

Henceforth my taste will not incline  
 To foods attaining hoary age;  
 Eight decades is so long a time  
 I'm convinced what I ate decayed.

Love is Blind

I've often pondered the reason why  
 To Niagara Falls honeymooners hie,  
 And I believe the answer lies  
 In the fact they've cataracts in their eyes.

For love is blind the sages say,  
 It's lucky for women it is that way;  
 Should a lover possess his normal sight  
 No man would be fish enough to bite.

But as it is they gladly deign  
 To bind themselves to ball and chain,  
 And when they see again aright  
 They realize their sorry plight.

The moral to this short sad rhyme  
 Is take your time, Bud, take your time;  
 For life is short and it may be sweet  
 If you don't let some dame sweep you off your feet.

Meditations of an Astronaut

In the top of the rocket I give earnest thought  
 To the wisdom of being an astronaut;  
 After all 'tis I who am taking the trip  
 Which may be fouled up by some ham-handed drip.

As they count from ten to that fateful one  
 Then push the button I'm the bum  
 Who grits his teeth and holds on to his belly  
 While the rocket blasts off I turn to jelly.

When restored to shape and some of my senses  
 The trip for me really commences;  
 The relief to be up engenders the thought  
 "Will I get back and on the right spot?"

So should you aspire to rise to the heights  
 On being an astronaut don't set your sights;  
 My advice to you for what it is worth  
 Is seek some other goal that's more down to earth.

A Hospital Day

Shortly after the break of dawn  
 That ends a night that seems so long,  
 The nurse comes in to update one's chart,  
 You then await the breakfast cart.

Doctors and nurses come and go,  
 What's about to happen you do not know;  
 The flitting in and running out  
 Leaves you in a cloud of doubt.

Will it be a test, scan or x-ray?  
 Apparently no one can say  
 Until there comes stretcher or chair  
 To whisk you off to their testing lair.

Various machines your innards reveal,  
 Portraying everything from head to heel;  
 When the doctors have seen the lot  
 They still can't tell you what you've got.

From dawn to dark the livelong day  
 Thus it goes through your hospital stay;  
 Sooner or later you'll get well,  
 How it is done no one can tell.

Sep./83.

Low Humour

Those for whom no puns arise  
 Pretend that humour to despise;  
 Though called the lowest form of wit  
 'Tis better than having not a bit.

The Awful Poet

Thank goodness his poetry was terse  
 Because, in truth, it couldn't be much verse.

Writer's Choice

Writing poetry was of his choosing,  
 It was for him kind of a-musing;  
 'Twas well he thusly wisely chose  
 For he knew not how to write in prose.

July 28/84.

